

INFORMATION PAPER

CECW-ON
7 April 1997

SUBJECT: Natural Resources Management Program Significance

1. Purpose. To provide information for the District Commander's Conference.

2. Facts.

a. The Corps is responsible for the stewardship of 11.7 million acres of land and water located at 463 water resources projects in 42 states.

b. Although the Corps administers less than 2% of the Federal land estate, Corps lands account for almost 30% of the recreation visitation to Federal lands. People are attracted to these projects by the unique experiences that water oriented recreational resources offer. Last year, more than 375 million recreational visits occurred at these projects. An analysis of this visitation revealed that more than 25 million individuals visited Corps projects at least once last year. (That's 10% of this nation's population!)

c. While most Federal lands that provide public recreation opportunities are either located in the west or are remote from major population centers, most Corps projects are in locations convenient to large numbers of the public. In fact, 80% are within 50 miles of a major metropolitan area, and 94% are within a two-hour drive. On an average summer weekend, many Corps projects grow in population to the size of small cities. Management of these rapid influxes and outflows of people with a minimum impact on the environment and our neighbors is an integral part of the Corps Recreation program.

d. Over the years, the Corps has developed a flexible management approach to recreation use at Corps administered projects. Although there are more than 4,300 separate recreation areas at Corps administered projects, more than 1,800 are managed by entities other than the Corps. This includes State and local Government, quasi-public organizations and the private sector. The Corps has more than 1,300 leases to State, country and city governments to assure recreational opportunities are specifically tuned to the needs of local populations. In addition, more than 400 commercial concessions provide those services which are most reasonably offered by the private sector. The Corps directly operates and maintains more than 2,500 recreation areas. At these sites, the Corps relies strongly on private service contractors. More than 50% of the Corps recreation operations and maintenance budget is expended on contractor services ranging from janitorial service to the operation of water treatment facilities. When given the opportunity, the public has demonstrated personal support for the Corps Natural Resources Management program by volunteering. In 1996, over 70,000 volunteers provided services valued at \$9 million.

e. Recreation is only one aspect of the multi-disciplinary Natural Resources Management

program. Many Corps projects are involved, either directly or indirectly through coordination with the States, in the management of the forest, range, fish wildlife, mineral and soil resources. The Corps is a steward, entrusted by the American public to manage the natural resources on project lands for the benefit of present and future generations, this responsibility guides all natural resources management activities.

3. This information paper has been approved by MG Russell L. Fuhrman, Director of Civil Works.

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